

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman

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CHRISTIAN BIBLES AND BUDDHIST SUTRAS EXCHANGED

A ceremony of the presentation of Bibles to Buddhists was held December 9 at the Ginza Tokyu Hotel, Tokyo. The Bibles were presented to the Buddhist leaders and pastors; in return the Buddhist Sutras are to be donated to the Copenhagen University and other universities in Denmark by the Federation of Buddhists in Japan. The purpose is the exchange of Christian and Buddhist doctrinal standards as well as Oriental and European culture. This gathering together of representatives of these two faiths is said to be epoch-making in the Christian history of Japan.

The event was occasioned by a Danish missionary, the Reverend Harry Thomsen, former director of the Christian Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto, who advised the Danish Bible Society to urge Christians to read the Buddhist Sutras. Mr. Thomsen is now in Shizuoka Prefecture and is working in the area of rural evangelism. He takes a great deal of interest in Buddhism. When the Reverend Mr. Miyakoda of the Japan Bible Society visited Denmark last year, he was entrusted with ¥2,500,000 (just under \$ 7,000) for the Bibles by the Danish Bible Society. As a result of consultation with the federation, it was decided to donate the Buddhist Scriptures to Denmark as a return favor.

At the ceremony, the Reverend Ryosen Takashima, chairman of the Buddhist Federation in Japan, chief Abbot of the Soto Sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan, and 40 other Buddhist leaders and pastors in clerical robe were present. Representing the Christian churches were the Reverend Shiro Murata, chairman of the executive board of the Japan Bible Society, the Reverend Mr. Miyakoda, general secretary of the Japan Bible Society, the Reverend Yorikazu Manabe, the Reverend Keitaro Nishimura of the Anglican Episcopal Church, the Reverend Michio Kozaki of the Reinanzaka Church, two Danish missionaries, the Reverend Mr. Thomsen, the Reverend Lyle Larson (American Lutheran Church) and others were present. After Mr. Miyakoda and

Chairman Takashima spoke, a part of the collection of the Buddhist Sutras and the Bibles were exchanged amid much applause. A party was held after the ceremony. The Federation of Buddhists in Japan will also send goodwill messages to Denmark in the Spring of 1964 and will donate the Buddhist Sutras.

During the social part of the program several people offered congratulations and brought greetings; the Reverend William P. Woodard of the International Institute for the Study of Religions; the Reverend Seiju Matsushita, President of Rikkyo (St. Paul's) University, said that in the present world situation people with deep religious convictions should make more of an effort to convert those with no religion rather than criticizing other religions; the Reverend Mr. Thomsen said that he had studied Buddhism for ten years in Japan and it is the great hope that Buddhists and Christians will take advantage of studying each other's Scriptures; the Reverend Mr. Takashima told the group that he is now 88 years old and that in a recent visit to Europe he discovered many similarities between Christianity and Buddhism. He gave as examples Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Maya, the mother of Buddha; Christ and Buddha. Now it is time for Christians and Buddhists to unite their forces in working for peace.

ARCHBISHOP CYPRIAN IN JAPAN

Archbishop Cyprian of the Russian Orthodox Church recently made a trip from Moscow to Japan, together with his assistant and an English interpreter. The purpose of the trip was reportedly made to open negotiations for the establishment of Soviet oriented Russian Orthodox churches in Japan. During his stay in Japan he attended a dinner sponsored by the National Christian Council at which time he was given the opportunity to speak with some of the NCC leaders.

The Archbishop wrote in a guest book in Russian that Japan and Russia are neighbors, with Moscow and Tokyo capitals of both nations. Christians in these two countries should pray for the peace of both nations. The group returned home by Air France on December 25.

A SEQUEL TO THE OCHANOMIZU STORY

At dusk on a chilly evening before Christmas a group of about 25 students gathered in front of Ochanomizu Station. This particular station is located in the heart of the university area. The students mounted a loud speaker. Each one took a candle in his hand and held his hymnbook waiting to begin. These students had come from the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church Student Center in Ichigaya; they were preparing to sing Christmas carols.

They gathered in a semi-circle and began to sing. Passers-by were invited to join in. Extra candles had been brought and words to the carols had been printed for distribution. Soon the semi-circle became a circle, then it became two persons deep around the circle. Before long all of the printed materials had been distributed; people began to look over the shoulders of those who held the sheets. Now about 250 had stopped to join in the singing. At this point, a man broke into the circle, obviously excited. He said he was surprised that this could happen in Japan. He stated that Christmas was meaningless, at least for the Japanese. No one moved. The answer was the singing of another Christmas carol!

JAPAN CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

As a result of an appeal to Christian schools by Japan Church World Service, a member of the National Christian Council, there were gathered such gifts of love as clothing, school supplies and books - enough to fill two trucks, one holding six tons and the other four. The amount contributed was over \$1100 with which the recipients will purchase school supplies, books, musical instruments and other

necessary items.

NCC VISITATION EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

The Visitation Evangelism Committee holds an institute class from January 14-16 in Kobe. Although this committee sponsors an institute annually in Tokyo, and has done so in the area for the past ten years, this will be the first meeting of this type in the Kobe area, which is the western part of Japan. The theme of the institute is, "Ye Shall Be My Witnesses to the End of the Earth." This has become a sort of New Year's resolution for those dedicated to evangelism. Approximately 200 people are expected to attend the session which is also to nurture spiritual fellowship. The program includes lectures, Biblical exegesis, witness, group discussion, prayer meetings and a service of Holy Communion, all of which will help the participants in their spiritual togetherness.

DR. GERMANY LEAVES FOR GENEVA

Dr. Charles H. Germany, executive Secretary of Interchurch Relationships of the United Church of Christ in Japan, left for Geneva on January 5, where he will hold a position in the headquarters of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches until next July. From the summer until February 1965 he will fill the post as minister of the First Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, U.S.A. Dr. Germany has been a missionary in Japan since 1947 where he has played an important role in the United Church of Christ in Japan. He was selected for the Geneva post by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, chairman of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, of the WCC.

DR. YAMADA RETURNS TO JAPAN

The Reverend Dr. Chuzo Yamada, General Secretary of the National Christian Council of Japan, returned to Japan on January 10, after attending the meeting of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches in Mexico. He visited denominational headquarters in the United States and spent some time with Dr. Lawrence L. Lacour, the founder of what is called L-Type Evangelism, the system of American and Canadian clergymen working for a summer in another country.

THE SALVATION ARMY IN JAPAN

The Salvation Army kettles, so familiar to many in the Western world, play a part in Japan's celebration of Christmas. Kettles were placed in eight strategic places in downtown Tokyo and standing by were officers of the Army who played their trumpets and called on the passers-by to give for the sake of charity. From December 17 through December 31 the appeal was made to people in the streets; the financial aim was for some \$20,000. The total of the eight kettles in Tokyo reached 300,000 to 500,000 yen a day, and included several 5,000 and 10,000 yen bills. At Ueno a group of workers made an offering together before going to work in the morning. A buddhist priest passing in the street heard the drums, stopped, and offered money along with a Buddhist prayer. A mother explained the meaning of the collection to her child and together they gave.

With these goodwill offering, officers of the Army sent Christmas gifts to children in the slum areas, to the elderly in homes for the aged and prepared places to stay for homeless people. One officer reported that more people gave this year than last and the Salvation Army certainly appreciated this evidence of goodwill; their money is being spent in the best way possible.

The result is not yet known, but it is felt that the Salvation Army has surpassed its goal; already the officers are considering the most effective ways of making these collections for next year.

THE JAPAN CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY CENTER

The new hospitality center for servicemen is doing a splendid job of entertaining Navy personnel who have time to spare in the port city of Yokohama. It was formally opened on February 14 of last year. Under the direction of Mr. Kanji Shimada, the center is located in the Tourists Arcade, close to the center of things. Mr. Shimada, 24 year-old young Christian, works closely with the chaplains and is in their office at the Chapel of Hope, Protestant church on the naval base, two days a week.

The little tatami (mat-floored) room is tastefully decorated in Japanese style, and represents a retreat for servicemen in the area. Tea is served, a guest book is kept on hand which visitors are requested to sign, and the kimono-clad hostess helps the men with their schedules. Many services are offered: tours; personal interpreters; visits to Japanese homes; or, if the men want to work, arrangements are made to paint or repair orphanages or churches, to visit sick children, or the elderly.

It is a happy place, doing a worthwhile job, under the sponsorship of the National Christian Council of Japan, in cooperation with the Ministry to Service Personnel in the Far East of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. The latter is represented by Rev. Karl Karpa of formerly Yokohama.

JAPAN CHURCHMEN ELECTED TO WORLD POSTS

At the recent meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held in Mexico City the following Japanese Churchmen were elected to posts:

Rev. Dr. Chuzo Yamada was elected to the Divisional Committee,
Rev. Dr. Tetsutaro Ariga was elected to the Missionary-Studies Committee, and
Rev. Tomio Muto was elected to the Christian Literature Fund Committee.

A JAPANESE PASTOR'S MINISTRY TO TRUCKERS

Along a heavily traveled highway in one of Japan's most industrialized areas stands a unique preaching-point of the United Church of Christ in Japan. Few persons think of it as a chapel, however, since the buildings consist of a diner and facilities for servicing heavy trucks.

A minister, Rev. Michio Imai, opened the diner both as a means of support and a way to get acquainted with factory workers in Kakegawa. His plan proved so effective that the presbytery soon approved the small restaurant as a preaching-point.

In his visits to the plants, Mr. Imai was impressed with the recreation halls and other benefits provided for the workers by unions or management. By contrast, the thousands of truck drivers passing the diner seemed to need a place to eat, to rest, and perhaps to talk with someone about their problems.

The completed facilities will include; a parking lot for 150 trucks; a service area; sleeping quarters to accommodate fifty men; a five-minute laundry service; a large dining hall. One of the center's most important functions will be to provide conversation with the drivers, most of whom are away from home several weeks at a time. The staff, numbering thirty persons working on a round-the-clock basis, will help drivers keep in touch with their families.

Commenting on Mr. Imai's ministry, the president of the local trucking association said; "His work is an oasis for human needs in the desert of traffic jams".